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SPEECH

OF

HON. JEREMIAH CLEMENS, OF ALA.,

ON

NON-INTERVENTION,

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 12, 1852.

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NON-INTERVENTION.

The Senate proceeded to consider the following resolutions, which were submitted by Mr. CLARKE on the 19th ultimo:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress recognizes and reaffirms these manifest truths: "That Governments are instituted among men to secure the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government, laying its foundation upon such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Resolved, That while we claim for ourselves these comprehensive rights of self-government, and also, as a consequence of sovereignty, the right to be exempt from the coercion, control, or interference of others in the management of our internal affairs, we concede to others the same measure of right, the same unqualified independence.

Resolved, That it is upon the sacred principle of independent sovereignty that we recognize, in our intercourse with other nations, Governments de facto, without inquiring by what means they have been established, or in what manner they exercise their powers.

Resolved, That this Government has solemnly adopted, and will perseveringly adhere to, as a principle of international action, the advice given by Washington in his Farewell Address: "Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all." "Give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel an example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence." "Sympathy for a favorite nation betrays itself into participation in the quarrels and wars of another, without adequate inducement or justification." "Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake; for foreign influence is the most baneful foe of republican Governments." "The true rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible." "Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?"

Resolved, That, while we cherish the liveliest sympathy towards all who strive for freedom of opinion and for free institutions, yet we recognize our true policy in the great fundamental principles given to us by Jefferson: "Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

Resolved, That although we adhere to these essential principles of non-intervention as forming the true and lasting foundation of our prosperity and happiness, yet whenever a provident foresight shall warn us that our own liberties and institutions are threatened, then a just regard to our own safety will require us to advance to the conflict rather than await the approach of the foes of our constitutional freedom and of human liberty.

Mr. SEWARD's amendment proposes to strike

out all after the second resolution of Mr. CLARKE, and insert:

Resolved, That while the United States, in consideration of the exigencies of society, habitually recognize Governments de facto in other States, yet that they are nevertheless by no means indifferent when such a Government is established against the consent of any people by usurpation or by armed intervention of foreign States or nations.

Resolved, That, considering that the people of Hungary, in the exercise of the right secured to them by the laws of nations, in a solemn and legitimate manner asserted their national independence, and established a Government by their own voluntary act, and successfully maintained it against all opposition by parties lawfully interested in the question; and that the Emperor of Russia, without just or lawful right, invaded Hungary, and, by fraud and armed force, subverted the national independence and political constitution thus established, and thereby reduced that country to the condition of a province ruled by a foreign and absolute power: the United States, in defence of their own interests, and of the common interests of mankind, do solemnly protest against the conduct of Russia on that occasion, as a wanton and tyrannical infraction of the laws of nations; and the United States do further declare that they will not hereafter be indifferent to similar acts of national injustice, oppression, and usurpation, whenever or wherever they may occur.

Mr. CASS's amendment is designed as a substitute for Mr. CLARKE's series. It is as follows:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That while the people of the United States sympathize with all nations who are striving to establish free Governments, yet they recognize the great principle of the law of nations which assures to each of them the right to manage its own internal affairs in its own way, and to establish, alter, or abolish its Government at pleasure, without the interference of any other Power; and they have not seen, nor could they again see, without deep concern, the violation of this principle of national independence.

Mr. CLEMENS said: Mr. President, when this question was last under consideration, I listened with deep attention to the remarks of the honorable Senator from Michigan, [Mr. Cass.] In that speech—perhaps the ablest of his life—there is much to which I cannot subscribe; but there is also much to which I yield a cordial assent. I had supposed that we differed more widely than we do; and that supposition was a source to me of profound regret, not merely because he is the acknowledged leader of the political party to which I belong, but more on account of the kind and cordial relations existing between us. It was therefore with sincere pleasure I heard him announce that he proposed no intervention in the affairs of other nations beyond an expression of opinion that the conduct of Russia had not been in accordance with the law of nations, and that we

could not look upon a similar violation of that law with unconcern.

I shall not go out of my way to discuss with the Senator from Michigan the propriety of the expression of such an opinion. I shall address myself rather to those who go far beyond that honorable Senator, and demand "material aid" for Hungary. I am afraid that there is a disposition in some quarters to undervalue the importance of this question. Indeed I have heard it, on one or two occasions, characterized as an abstraction. I wish it was. In my opinion, it is not only a question of immediate and pressing importance, but it is a question, upon the correct decision of which, must depend the liberty and happiness of generations who are to come after us.

A foreigner has landed upon our shores, preaching a crusade against the nations of the Old World, and boldly asking us to incorporate a new principle in the foreign policy of the nation. Of that foreigner it is necessary that I should say something. That he is an orator of considerable ability, is conceded; but he is an orator merely. To call him a hero, is, in my opinion, a very near approach to the ridiculous. The man who was the first to shrink at the approach of the tempest he had raised, who abandoned his country when he had still an army of one hundred and thirty-five thousand men at his command; who surrendered the powers vested in him for the good of the State into the hands of a man, whom for months, he had believed to be a traitor, is not made of such stuff as Washington, or Sumter, or Marion, or Greene. The excessive laudations which have been heaped upon him since his arrival among us, must, in the eyes of foreign nations, who know his history far better than we seem to know it, cover us with ridicule, if not with contempt. Not long since, I saw a letter, written by an individual in high place, in which the writer seemed to be at a loss for words to express the amount of his *reverence* for the "illustrious Magyar." An American citizen, a freeman, talking about his *reverence* for any living thing below the God that made him! Sir, I neither feel reverence, nor anything approaching it, for one who has proved himself to be as weak and vacillating in the hour of danger, as he was reckless and uncalculating before its approach. But I have no wish to deal in unkind expressions towards him. As an individual I entertain for him no feeling but that of indifference. It is almost impossible that he should ever become either a friend or an enemy of mine. Nor would I speak of him at all, but for the doctrines he advances; and for the further fact, that he has been invested by his advocates with almost numberless virtues, for the purpose of enlisting sympathy in his behalf, and preparing the public mind to yield a readier assent to his teachings. None know better than the demagogues who have surrounded him since his arrival here, that the voice of wisdom may be drowned by the wild shouts of a frenzied mob, clamoring for the establishment of freedom throughout the world. And hence it is that we have him presented to us as a pure republican, whose exile is a consequence of his ministrations at the altar of Liberty, and whose whole life has been one long labor in the cause of human rights.

Now, sir, I do not believe this; but I should not trouble myself to contradict it, if it were not

for the intention which dictates the eulogy. That he has labored, and is laboring zealously, to obtain aid for Hungary, is not to be denied; and I neither know nor care what amount of stimulus may have been added to his exertions by disappointed ambition and deep-rooted enmity to the Power that vanquished him. He would not be human, if some such feeling did not find a place in his bosom. I blame him not, if it is there; and do not care to inquire how far it may have governed his conduct. But, sir, the apostle of freedom should illustrate, by his own example, its beauty and simplicity. On a former occasion, I expressed doubts whether he really understood the simple creed, which has been the source of all our happiness and all our greatness. Since that time he has been among us, and those doubts have ripened into convictions. And here again let me say, I do not blame him. He had been accustomed to the pageantry of courts, to the "pomp, pride, and circumstance" which surround the monarchs of the Old World, and he naturally supposed that these were necessary adjuncts to a favorable impression upon the people. To this cause I attribute the unnecessary display of uniforms and sabres, which gave to a quiet hotel in this city much the appearance of the headquarters of a commanding general in a conquered country. To this cause, also, I attribute the bad taste which brought an armed guard into this Hall on the day of his reception here; when, for the first time since their erection, these walls echoed the jingle of arms. Let us hope that it is no omen of scenes which are to follow. But when I remembered the peaceful purposes for which this building grew under the hands of the architect; when I remembered that, to this body, above all others, the people are accustomed to look, to check rashness, to rebuke violence, and to frown down all schemes of extravagance and excitement, I confess I felt something like a shudder at the unwonted rattling of foreign sabres in the inmost temple of American Liberty.

There is another circumstance I must not omit to mention. If Kossuth had been the ardent republican which he is represented, there is one spot in this vicinity no difficulty would have deterred him from visiting. Neither storm nor tempest—the summer's heat nor winter's snow should have prevented him from making a pilgrimage to Mount Vernon, and kneeling at the tomb of the wisest, the noblest, and the purest of all those who have done battle in the cause of mankind. But that great name seems to have awakened in him no enthusiasm, and the spot where the remains of Washington are interred, has been undisturbed by the tread of Hungarian feet. I doubt if there is a monarch in Europe who would have been guilty of similar neglect; who would have manifested so little reverence for the dead—so little regard for the holiest feelings of the living.

Mr. President, I have now done with the individual. It is to his mission that I shall address myself. His first proposition is, that every nation has the right to regulate its own affairs in its own way; and to this I shall interpose no objection. But Mr. Kossuth and I may differ very widely as to what constitutes a nation, and consequently as to who it is in whom this right resides. I do not admit that every part of an empire, whether it be called a province, state, or

department, is a nation. Hungary is and has long been a part of the Austrian Empire, and is no more independent of the Chief Executive than is New York of the General Government. If the State of New York should undertake to regulate her own affairs in her own way—to appropriate the immense revenues collected in her ports—to form alliances with foreign nations, and to tax the citizen of Pennsylvania or Massachusetts, whose business required him to pass through her territory, it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose that an army would soon be collected on her borders, and that her right would be made to depend upon her power to enforce it. I think I but utter an admitted truth, when I say that the right to regulate the affairs of the United States, to watch over the interests of the whole Union, to guard and to defend them, is here, and must remain here, until the people take it away either by successful revolution or by constitutional amendments. So, I take it, the right to regulate the affairs of the Austrian Empire resides in its Executive head, until the people see fit to withdraw the powers they have vested in him. If a minority are dissatisfied and wish to change their form of government, there is no recourse but revolution; and not until that revolution is successfully accomplished can they claim a place among the nations of the earth. If it were possible to collect all the Germans in the United States into one State, the Irish in another, the French in another, although each might speak its own language and be governed by its own local laws, they would no more be entitled to the appellation of nations than now, when they are diffused throughout the whole Republic. Mere difference of language, and of local laws, is no evidence of nationality. Something more is needed; and it would be easy to show that, in enunciating his first proposition, Kossuth has made a case against himself.

But, sir, I do not wish to pursue the inquiry. It is immaterial whether or not any such right is to be found in the law of nations. Indeed it is somewhat difficult for any one at all conversant with the history of the world to suppress a smile while listening to learned dissertations in favor of rights founded on the law of nations. That nation does not exist which has not disregarded all such laws whenever prompted by interest to do so. To take care of its own interest, to provide for its own security, is and always has been the ruling principle of every nation, irrespective of any public law. So universal has been this practice, that I recollect but one instance in all history to the contrary, and that was when Themistocles wished to burn the ships of the other Grecian States, and was prevented by the report of Aristides to the Athenians, that though nothing could be more advantageous to Athens, nothing could be more unjust. England pursued a different course at Copenhagen; and by so doing, struck one of the heaviest blows ever dealt at the power of Napoleon. I make no comment upon the different degrees of morality exhibited by the ancient and the modern, the heathen and the christian. I merely state historical facts, and from them I draw the deduction, that a right without the means of making it respected is a mockery. It is admitted that Hungary has no such means. The question, then, arises, Shall we furnish them? This is the point, the whole gist of the matter. Let me begin

by supposing that it is in our power to do so—that we have the ability to punish Russian interference and repel Russian invasion—how are we to be benefited? What portion of the fruits of victory is to inure to us? I do not address this question to dinner orators, brimfull of philanthropy and champagne, nor to vainglorious militia colonels, who are exceedingly anxious to march to Hungary to-morrow, but who could not make it convenient to march to Mexico when our country was engaged in war. I address it to grave Senators, who are charged with the interests of twenty-five millions of people, and who are responsible to the present and the future for the manner in which they discharge the duties assigned them.

General Washington has said:

"There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon any real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, and which a just pride ought to discard."

There is a deep wisdom in this paragraph, and he who disregards or treats it lightly wants the highest attribute of a statesman. We can expect nothing as a favor from other nations, and none have a right to expect favors from us. Our interference, if we interfere at all, must be dictated by interest; and therefore I ask, in what possible manner can we be benefited? Russia has done us no injury; we have, therefore, no wrongs to avenge. Russia has no territory of which we wish to deprive her, and from her there is no danger against which it is necessary to guard. Enlightened self-interest does not offer a single argument in favor of embroiling ourselves in a quarrel with her. So obvious, so indisputable is this truth, that the advocates of "intervention" have based their speeches almost solely on the ground that we have a divine mission to perform, and that is to strike the manacles from the hands of all mankind. It may be, Mr. President, that we have such a mission; but, if so, the "time of its fulfillment is not yet." And, for one, I prefer waiting for some clearer manifestation of the Divine Will. By attempting to fulfill it now, we employ the surest means of disappointing that "manifest destiny," of which we have heard so much. We have before us the certainty of inflicting deep injury upon ourselves, without the slightest prospect of benefiting others. According to Kossuth's own admission, Russia can precipitate upon Hungary one hundred thousand men in thirty days; Austria, at the lowest calculation, can bring as many more into the field. If we give them notice, in advance, that we intend to interfere in the affairs of Hungary, not only these troops, but all the disposable forces of both empires will be collected at the most convenient points, and an attempted revolution would be crushed before we heard it had begun. I need not depict the unenviable attitude in which we would then be placed. Involved in a war without an object, our ally vanquished, the very chains we sought to loosen riveted with tenfold strength, the miserable victims of their own and our folly piling curses upon us, with the sneering taunts of the victors adding the last mortification to the Quixotism of America. Sir, if I had but one prayer to offer for my country, it would be, "May God avert this deep disgrace!" Misfortunes may come upon us all; dishonor attaches only to the unworthy. A nation may be conquered, trodden down; her living sons in chains, her dead the prey of vultures, and still leave a

bright example—a glorious history to after times. But when folly and wickedness have ruled the hour; when disaster is the legitimate child of error and weakness, the page that records it is but a record of infamy, and pity for misfortune becomes a crime against justice.

Sir, I do not love that word “destiny”—“manifest” or not “manifest.” Men and nations make their own destinies.

“Our acts, our angels are, or good or ill—
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

The future of this Republic is in our hands, and it is for us to determine whether we will launch the ship of State upon a wild and stormy sea, above whose blackened waters no sunshine beams, no star shines out, where not a ray is seen but what is caught from the lurid lightning as it treads its fiery path. This, Senators, is the mighty question we have to solve, and let me add, that if the freedom of one continent and the hopes of four shall sink beneath that inky flood, ours will be the guilt, ours the deep damnation it deserves.

Shall I be told these are idle fears? That in a war with Russia, no matter for what cause waged, we must be the victors? That, in short, all Europe combined could not blot this Union from the map of nations? Ah, sir, that is not all I fear. I fear success even more than defeat. The Senator from Michigan [Mr. Cass] was right when he said that our fears were to be found at home. I do fear ourselves. Commit our people once to unnecessary foreign wars, let victory encourage the military spirit already too prevalent among them, and Roman history will have no chapter bloody enough to be transmitted to posterity side by side with ours. In a brief period we shall have reenacted, on a grander scale, the same scenes which marked her decline. The veteran soldier who has followed a victorious leader from clime to clime, will forget his love of country in his love for his commander, and the bayonets you have sent abroad to conquer a kingdom will be brought back to destroy the rights of the citizen and prop the throne of an emperor.

I have thus, sir, briefly traced the prospective effects of intervention. Let me refer as briefly to its present and immediate effects. We must begin with an outlay, at the lowest calculation, of one hundred millions of dollars; and this, be it remembered, is but a beginning. Our navy must be quadrupled, our army increased not less than an hundred thousand men. Every foot upon our long line of sea-coast, from Maine to the Rio Grande, and from Northern Oregon to Southern California, must be garrisoned, and the immense sums thus expended must be dragged directly from the pockets of the people. All of us know, that in a war with a maritime power, our revenues from imports must decrease below the wants of the Government. But grievous as would be this load of debt, it is the lightest of the evils we will be called upon to bear. From direct invasion, I admit that we have nothing to fear: from battles upon the ocean, between national vessels, just as little. The danger is of another kind. There is not a sea which an American vessel is not this moment traversing. There is not a clime unknown to our commerce.

Whenever war is declared, the lust of gain and the love of adventure will cover the ocean with privateers, and the rich fruits gathered by the arts

of peace will be sacrificed to the demon of folly. The spindles of the New England manufacturer will stand still; the door of the New York merchant will be closed; the ploughshare of the Northwestern farmer will rust in the furrow; and the noise of the cotton-gin will no longer be heard. Not a pound of bacon nor a barrel of flour, not a sack of corn, nor a bag of cotton, not a hogshhead of tobacco, nor a tierce of rice, can leave our ports without danger of capture. The hardy mariner, who pursues his perilous calling in the northern seas, may find himself a captive, and the fruits of long years of toil swept away before he is aware that he has an enemy to avoid. The life-blood will stagnate in every vein of our commerce; and every interest will wither under its blighting influence. Is this picture too highly colored? Grant that it is so. Grant that but one tenth part of what is here depicted will come to pass, and the eye of the patriot will still turn with a shudder from the dark prospect on which it rests. But is it in truth overdrawn? There are Senators here who remember the war of 1812, its trials and its sufferings; and all of us have learned from history or tradition that these sufferings were sufficient to cast a veil even over the deformities of treason, and to cause the formation of a party whose object was to make a separate peace with the common enemy, and leave the rest of the Republic to take care of itself. Can it be doubted that with a greatly extended commerce these evils will be proportionately increased, and moreover that they would be aggravated by the reflection that they were brought upon us against reason and without necessity? It may be said, sir, that an argument of this sort extends to all wars as well as to the particular case under consideration. Undoubtedly to some extent it does so. No war can be carried on without detriment to the prosperity or the morality of the people; but there may be cases which justify, there may be wrongs which demand, the sacrifice; and whenever such a case arises, I shall not be the last to draw the sword.

I am afraid, Mr. President, that after the able and judicious remarks of the Senator from Rhode Island, [Mr. CLARKE,] I shall but tax the patience of the Senate by referring to the opinions of former Presidents; but if it should be somewhat tedious to this body, it will not be un instructive to the country. There has been no disagreement of opinion among them, no matter to what section of the Union they belonged, no matter to what party they owed their elevation to power: all of them have urged non-interference with the affairs of other nations as the dictate alike of interest and of duty. All of them, with singular unanimity, have maintained and enforced the precepts of the Father of his Country. I am aware that it is becoming somewhat unfashionable to argue from the usages and experience of the past. It has been again and again announced that rules which were well enough for the government of an infant Republic, are valueless now; that a change of circumstances necessarily induces a change of policy; and that what was wisdom yesterday may be folly to-morrow. Much of this may be true. I do not mean that we should blindly follow any policy without reference to circumstances. I do not mean to say that, because the Spartans lived on black broth, and used nothing but iron money, therefore we ought to follow their example; but what I do

mean to say is, that there are certain great truths which no time can change, no circumstances affect, and chief among these I reckon the duty of every nation to provide for the substantial happiness of its *own* citizens. No matter whether in infancy, maturity, or decline, this is a policy no nation can neglect with safety—no people can disregard without suffering.

It was on this principle that Washington acted. I propose to read, sir, a few short paragraphs from his Farewell Address:

"The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

"Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

"Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient Government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

"Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?"

Now, Mr. President, the authority of the honorable Senator from Michigan to the contrary notwithstanding, I must say that it is not in a document thus carefully prepared, solemnly announcing opinions so maturely formed, that we are to look for advice intended to guide us for a season only. Every word of that Address was intended to have its weight so long as the Republic should endure. Guided by a wisdom but little short of inspiration, he foresaw the possibility of a case such as that which has now arisen, and affectionately warned us to beware of dangers which might prove fatal to the Republic. I trust, sir, that there is yet among the people too much respect for the memory of George Washington, too much gratitude for his services, to permit his counsels to be disregarded. I trust we are not yet prepared to exchange the calm and patriotic advice of the sagacious statesman for the noisy babblings of political aspirants, still less for the interested suggestions of a foreigner, seeking the attainment of his own selfish ends, no matter at what cost, no matter at what sacrifice of the interest of others.

The most popular and the most powerful of the successors of General Washington held similar opinions. I read from the fourth annual message of Andrew Jackson:

"In the view I have given of our connection with foreign Powers, allusions have been made to their domestic disturbances or foreign wars, to their revolutions or dissensions. It may be proper to observe, that this is done solely in cases where those events affect our political relations with them, or to show their operation on our commerce. Further than this, it is neither our policy nor our right to interfere. Our best wishes on all occasions, our good offices when required, will be afforded, to promote the domestic tranquility and foreign peace of all nations with whom we have any intercourse. Any intervention in their affairs

further than this, *even by the expression of an official opinion*, is contrary to our principles of international policy, and will always be avoided."

I might go on until I had filled a volume with similar extracts; but it is not needed. The obvious good sense of attending to our own business, requires no authority to sustain it. We are now rich, happy, and powerful. If we continue in the course we have thus far pursued, imagination can set no bounds to our progress. I profess, sir, to have as much sympathy for the oppressed as other men. As an individual, I think it quite possible that I would peril life and limb in such a cause, as readily as the noisiest advocates of intervention; but in this Chamber I endeavor to separate the man from the legislator, looking only to the good of the country, seeking to perpetuate its institutions, and preserve unimpaired the high privileges we enjoy; I can permit neither sympathies nor enmities to govern my conduct, nor sway me from the pathway pointed out by reason and reflection. Feeling, pride, passion, prejudice, are all out of place here. The interests of this great nation, and its continued existence as a free Republic, must not be subjected to capricious legislation, dictated by sympathies which may be misplaced—which are always unreflecting. The heart is a bad counsellor at best. An individual may be pardoned for yielding to its promptings when the risk is all his own; but no code of morals, no precept of religion can excuse or extenuate the guilt of him who idly perils a nation's welfare, a people's happiness.

It was an inflexible rule of the Roman Senate, never to make peace with a victorious enemy, lest amid the sufferings and humiliations of defeat they might be tempted to sacrifice the interests of the Republic. No wonder that a people governed by such rules became the masters of the world. Over them the passions had no sway—reason ruled supreme. Cold as the marble columns about them, no wild fancies led them into profitless adventures, no vain dreams of universal philanthropy taught them to forget the higher duties they owed to Rome.

The present project of intervention does not come recommended to me by the company in which it proposes to place us. We are asked to act in conjunction with England, who may well find it for her own interest and her own safety, but who will offer us nothing in exchange for our share in the common danger and the common expense. The policy of England is known to the world, and all history is false if she ever formed an alliance without a selfish end in view. Whatever nation subserves her purposes, is her ally for the time being, but not a moment longer. A league with England, out of which any good could arise to America, is an Utopian dream, of which a school-boy should be ashamed.

In her case, also, even feeling prompts us to reject the proffered fellowship. There are many wounds inflicted in the past whose "poor dumb mouths" plead eloquently against such an alliance. The fierce Tarlton and the merciless Rawdon are not yet forgotten. The house burnings of Cockburn and the savage massacres of Proctor still blacken the page of history. Time has not abated the deep indignation excited by the brutal war-cry which rang over the plains of New Orleans; and none of us remember, without a feeling of resent-

ment, the Vandal inroad to which this capital was subjected. That large class of our population who are of Irish birth or Irish extraction have darker memories to cherish and deeper wrongs to avenge. Many of them have had their infant slumbers broken by the rattle of musketry and the fierce yell of an infuriated soldiery, and none of them have forgotten that there was a time when the frightened peasant who fled to the mountain or the morass for safety, was lighted on his way by the flames bursting from the roof of his cottage; when the dungeon was filled with the noblest in the land, and the scaffold groaned with the weight of its victims; when terror walked side by side with the paid informer, and desolation made its home in Ireland.

These are the souvenirs connected with the name of England; and I will not so libel a gallant people as to suppose for a moment that they have any great anxiety to clasp in friendship hands red with the best blood of their native land. Let me not be misunderstood. I seek no quarrel with England, but I do not forget what she has done, and I want no alliance with her. So long as she attends to her own business, and does not presume to meddle with ours, I am willing that our present relations should continue. But let her beware how she arouses the animosities now slumbering in the American bosom. The bones and sinews of the young giant of the West are fast hardening into mature manhood, and the next time we meet in hostile conflict the proud boast that the roll of the English drum may be heard from the rising to the setting sun, will be nothing but a tale of the past. Then, too, may the Irish heart leap with a proud joy, for the time will have come when the epitaph of Emmet may at last be written.

Mr. President, we have all read recently, and none of us I trust without deep feeling, the opinions of the venerable statesman whose bodily in-

firmity now keeps him from among us. Who is there with a higher wisdom than his? Who is there with a wider experience? Who is there with so few motives to deceive himself or others as to the true interests of his country! His voice comes to us clothed with all the sanctity the grave can give, with the added knowledge of existing things, which the grave must take away. Standing upon the verge of two worlds, and looking back upon that which he is about to leave, his heart swelling with a patriotism little less than holy, his vision clear and unclouded by the passions and prejudices which dim our sight, he tells us that ours is a mission of peace, not a mission of blood; that to avoid all interference in the affairs of other nations, to preserve our own independence, to live for America, to labor for America, and if need be to die for America, is a sacred duty, the performance of which will best serve the cause of human liberty in every land beneath the sun. Sir, I shall follow his advice. If my own judgment differed from his, I should distrust it, and feel inclined rather to be governed by the suggestions of him whom all men of every party have agreed to name patriot, statesman, sage.

Mr. President, I have nearly done. It is my habit to compress what I have to say into as small a space as possible, and I have not departed from it on the present occasion. If I have ever studied words at all, it has only been to ascertain how few could be made to answer my purpose. There is one great rule of conduct, applicable alike to individuals and to nations, a stern and rigid adherence to which leads inevitably to power, prosperity, and happiness. That rule has been so well embodied by England's greatest poet, that I give it in his own words:

"And this above all, to thine ownself be true,
And it will follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

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